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Office of Equal Employment Opportunity & Civil Rights

Guidance for Supervisors and Managers

Making A Difference

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION

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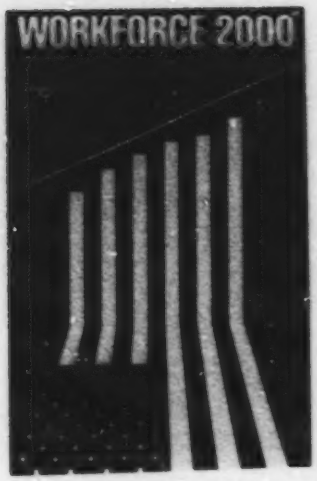
FOREWORD

Equal opportunity in the workforce is best accomplished through a proactive organizational model rather than the traditional reactive confrontational model. This proactive approach is based on effective program management, leadership and organizational development. Basically, what we've organized here at FDA is an approach that involves three major program areas—complaints processing, affirmative action, special initiatives and communications. In terms of these functions, our office is a service office and communications is the key.

FDA's Office of Equal Employment and Civil Rights welcomes the responsibility of helping and teaching and ensuring that people have the necessary skills to implement EEO activities and programs. This publication has been designed to benefit the supervisors and managers of FDA in terms of providing an overview of the function of the OEE&CR and the resources available for meeting EEO responsibilities and obligations.



We're at the nexus of change and given our role as change agents or change consultants, then it is important that when change is introduced that support be available to those people who will be affected. People cannot prevent those things that they know very little about nor implement programs and activities without the necessary communications. People cannot realistically meet EEO expectations or any other expectations if guidelines are not articulated to them.

It is my professional and personal belief that we all need to be more involved. When opportunities appear, we must maximize their potential to the fullest. Our scope cannot be esoterically focused on FDA related issues only because equal employment opportunity and human rights are not achieved in a vacuum within agency confines. Both practically and philosopically, we're an integral part of the community at large and accountability for results must be shared by everyone on all levels.

"For a difference to be a difference, it has to make a difference." The bottom line is that we are committed to making the difference.

Percy W. Thomas, Sc.D.
Director
OEE&CR

BACKGROUND

The Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Act of 1972, Public Law 92-261, brought Federal employees and agencies under the equal employment provision of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It also required that Federal agencies allocate sufficient resources to ensure a results-oriented program.

In 1978, the Civil Service Reform Act gave the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) responsibility and authority for processing complaints of discrimination and for affirmative action in the Federal government.

The Food and Drug Administration is a public health agency whose primary mission is to protect and promote the public health and well-being of consumers. It is one of the agencies of the Public Health Service which, in turn, is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The Food and Drug Administration's commitment to equal employment opportunity is demonstrated by the leadership and direction provided by the Office of Equal Employment and Civil Rights. However, Equal Employment Opportunity responsibility is also shared by every line manager and supervisor in the FDA.

The OEE&CR has services available to more than 7500 individuals employed by FDA. Responsibilities are carried out on a nationwide basis through a variety of outreach efforts, the foundations of which are technical assistance and training activities and compliance activities. The Office provides the accountability, the leadership, the innovation and the performance necessary to convert this vision of equity and justice into reality.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The OEE&CR provides technical assistance to supervisors, managers, and other employees by making available information, materials and skills necessary in meeting their equal employment opportunity responsibilities. Assistance includes sponsoring and developing seminars, workshops and training for supervisors and managers regarding various EEO employment issues. Such issues include, but are not limited to, the prevention and resolution of discrimination complaints, reasonable accommodation and accessibility for handicapped employees, and special program initiatives for target groups which include women, minorities and the handicapped.

Regularly scheduled workshops provide forums in which FDA EEO counselors learn specific counseling and resolution techniques and methods of communication. The OEE&CR also makes available immediate access to updates on EEO statutes, regulations, policies and procedures to all EEO counselors as well as to all FDA supervisors and managers and others who have a need to know.

On-site evaluations may be requested to identify EEO issues and concerns and to recommend appropriate actions to enhance the EEO environment. Additionally, the OEE&CR provides a number of services through interpersonal contact with FDA managers, supervisors and other employees on career opportunities and job enhancement.

To empower organizational units to determine their own EEO programs and activities, the Technical Assistance Resource Library further extends training opportunities for all FDA personnel. Films, videotapes, books and other publications are available on a no cost loan basis to all employees. With these resources, training can be implemented or supplemented or the library can be utilized for general research or casual reading. The material is on a broad range of EEO topics and related subject areas including:

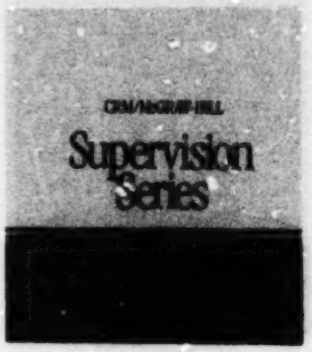
- Management and Communication
- Career Development
- Attitudinal Barriers
- Minority, Women and Handicaps
- General Employment Issues
- EEO Issues and Case Studies

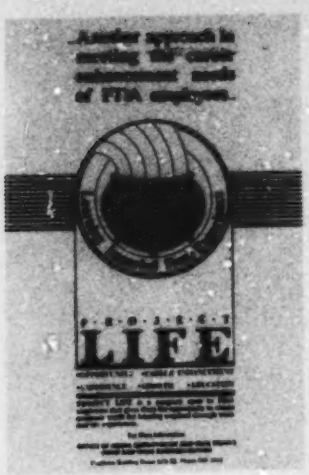
DEMONSTRATING A PREVENTIVE APPROACH

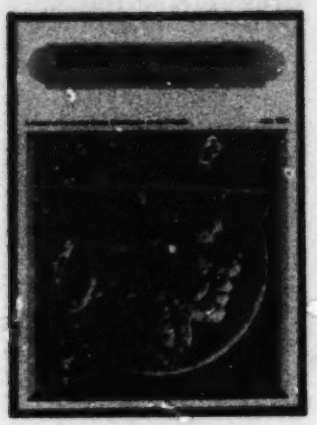
Daily coaching and counseling is available to support supervisors and managers regarding the varying legal aspects of discrimination and the methodologies for promoting proactive and preventive attitudes. Special seminars and workshops are designed to improve and enhance the understanding of what constitutes discrimination, how to avoid discriminatory behavior and how to remedy it when it is found.

Through on-site interviews, evaluations and analysis of data, issues and concerns are identified and problem solving mechanisms established. Both formal and informal on-site visits can be scheduled in support of the communication process.

The Equal Employment Counselors Program plays a vital role in the overall program structure. EEO counselors serve as bridges between employees and management and provide open line of communication which encourage and promote successful resolution on an informal basis. Such successful resolutions allow both parties to put any dispute behind them and thus avoid what may become a protracted and time-consuming process—one that is often emotionally and physically stressful and, ultimately, nonproductive.







Among FDA's Special Initiatives is PROJECT LIFE (Learning Imparted From Experience), a program whereby agency employees can obtain college level academic credit for on-the-job and life experiences.

Also designated as a Special Initiative is FDA's support of SACNAS, the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans. Meeting the need for collective efforts to increase the participation of the Native Americans and Mexican Americans in the field of science and related occupations, the agency works with SACNAS on joint activities and sponsors undergraduate and graduate science students from the minorities for various education conferences and events.

The Native American Program has also recently been established to enhance employment and advancement opportunities for Native Americans throughout FDA and to serve as a resource and advisor on Native American issues and concerns.

Additionally, the OEE&CR works with various agency offices and centers to ensure that minorities, women and the handicapped are adequately represented on FDA advisory committees and panels.

PROMOTING FUTURE HIRING

FDA and the OEE&CR have long recognized that the greatest asset of any agency is its people. Going beyond a standard commitment to recruitment, the agency has taken significant steps to develop and enlarge the reservoir of qualified health professionals. Through the Special Emphasis Programs and agency Special Initiatives, the OEE&CR addresses issues of underrepresentation by providing assistance to supervisors and managers regarding the recruitment and hiring of women, minorities and the handicapped.

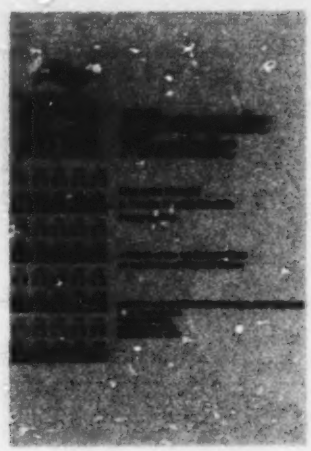
Current among Special Initiatives is COSTEP, the Commissioned Officer Student Training and Extern Program. This program provides the opportunity for women and minority students from accredited universities to experience the professional environment of the Public Health Service and to become familiar with careers in the Service. Operational on a year round basis, students may apply for a tour of duty ranging from 45 to 120 days and often, upon college graduation, pursue a career with PHS.

As a Special Initiative, the OEE&CR has established a network with Historically Black Colleges and Universities for the purpose of identifying minority students interested in future employment with FDA. Because these schools have demonstrated dire need, another activity of this Special Initiative is the transfer of excess and surplus scientific equipment to these schools. The OEE&CR encourages all supervisors and managers to actively participate in this project. The guidance and assistance available through the office enables supervisors and managers to support the HBCU network, thereby reaching and motivating many minority students as well as providing another mechanism to address the issue of underrepresentation.

Another Special Initiative addressing recruitment is the active support of AMHPS, the Association of Minority Health Professions Schools. Technical assistance is provided on upgrading the schools' scientific curriculum and joint conferences encourage hundreds of students to pursue and complete educational programs in health, medical or science fields.

The impact of these Special Initiatives regarding recruitment and hiring can only portend well for the future in meeting the health care needs of the nation.

HELPING PEOPLE REALIZE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL



The organizational structure of the OEE&CR provides for implementation of various Special Emphasis Programs. These programs are designed to enhance employment and advancement opportunities for targeted groups which constitute a steadily increasing percentage of our nation's workforce. They include:

- The Hispanic Employment Program
  This program is designed to provide expanded employment opportunities for Hispanics and to serve as a resource for articulating Hispanic goals for the purpose of creating a climate conducive to the hiring and advancement of Hispanics.
- The Handicapped and Disabled Veterans Program
  Besides being involved with reasonable accommodation, accessibility and other technical assistance, this program's basic purpose is to promote recruitment opportunities for the handicapped and for disabled veterans.
- The Federal Women's Program
  Addressing priority issues and concerns specific to women, this program promotes and enhances the employment status of women throughout the agency.

All of these programs have been established to promote the concerns of their respective populations and to provide leadership and guidance to FDA on program implementation responsibilities in the ongoing EEO program.

FDA's commitment to equal employment opportunity extends far beyond mandatory working requirements. Created expressly to chart new directions and paths are FDA's Special Initiatives. They demonstrate what is possible when innovation and initiation combine with action.

TRAINING FOR EXCELLENCE

Throughout its policies, programs and activities, the emphasis of the OEE&CR comes back again and again, explicitly and implicitly, to training. Nowhere is the aspect of training more important than in addressing the issues of equal employment opportunity. Workshops, seminars and conferences are available to employees from all levels and segments of the workforce, men and women of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. Following is a training sampler wherein the opportunity is to learn, to share, to experience, and, ultimately, to make a difference.

- Effective Multi-Cultural Workforce Practices
- Career Development Issues and Strategies for Asian/Pacific Women
- Supervision of Employees with Disabilities
- Federal Women's Program
- Equal Employment Opportunity Counselors Workshop
- How to Prepare a Successful SF-171
- Effective Communications
- Achieving Excellence
- Black Students: Perceptions, Attitudes and Success
- Sexual Harassment
- Handicapped Awareness
- Statistical Analysis for EEO Professionals
- Career Development Issues and Strategies for Native Americans

For more information, contact

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